

Core Question 3: Is the organization effective and well run?

The Governance and Leadership Performance Framework, outlined in Core Question 3, gauges the academic and operational leadership of schools. Core Question 3 consists of six indicators designed to measure schools on how well their school administration and board of directors comply with the terms of their charter agreement, applicable laws, and authorizer expectations.

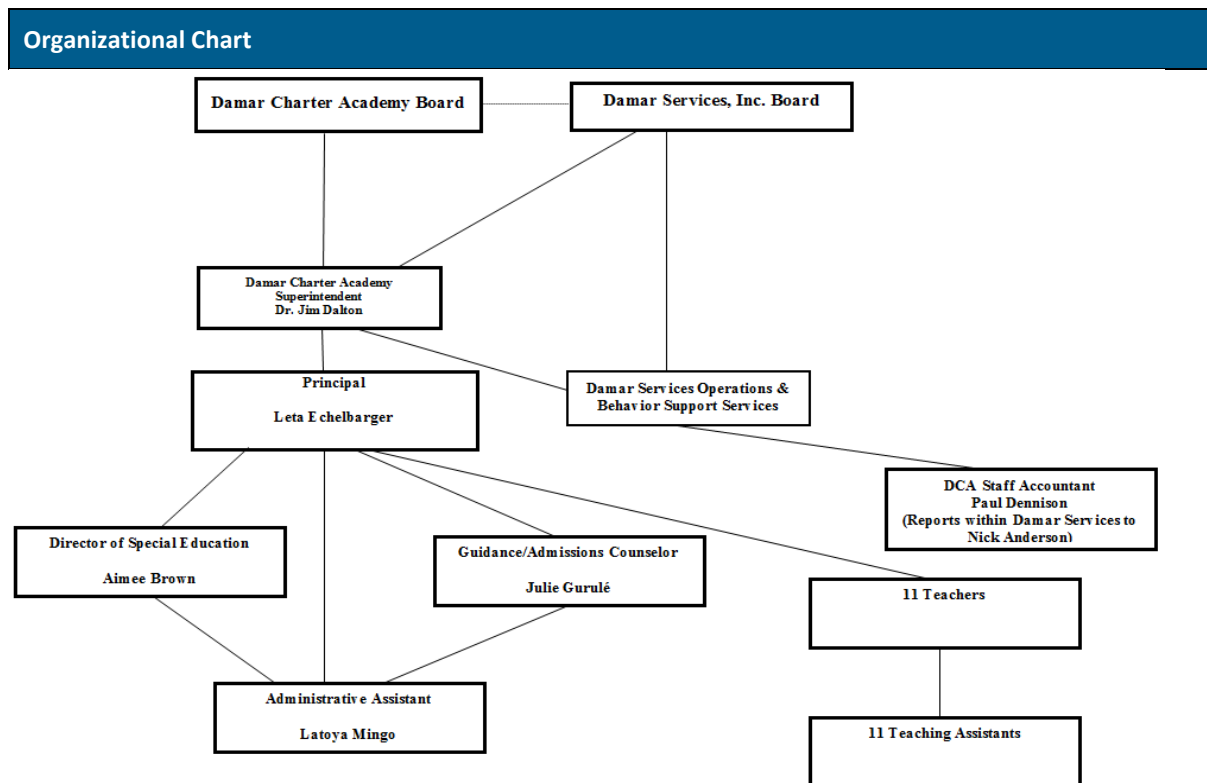
3.1. Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school leader presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.					
	Approaching standard	The school leader presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.					
	Meets standard	The school leader complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.					
	Exceeds standard	The school leader consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.					
3.1 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	MS	MS	MS	MS			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Demonstration of sufficient academic and leadership experience						ES
	Leadership stability in key administrative positions						AS
	Communication with internal and external stakeholders						ES
	Clarity of roles among schools and staff						ES
	Engagement in a continuous process of improvement and establishment of systems for addressing areas of deficiency in a timely manner						MS
	Consistency in providing information to and consulting with the schools' board of directors						MS

The leadership team at Damar Charter Academy (DCA) consists of the Superintendent, Principal, and Director of Special Education. As a team, they demonstrate extensive experience in education. The superintendent spent several years supporting special education in schools, teaching at the higher education level, and earning a doctorate in clinical psychology. He has worked with Damar Services, Inc., the parent organization of DCA, since 2002 and has worked with the school since its opening in 2011.

The principal joined Damar Charter Academy in December, with not only a full administrative license, but several years of administrative experience. While the school did not have stable leadership in this key position, the Superintendent, Director of Special Education and the Guidance Counselor ensured stability in programming for the staff and school as a whole.

The Director of Special Education has been with Damar Services, Inc. since 1996, serving as a manager, instructor, coordinator, and director for multiple programs within the organization. Together, with additional support from the school Guidance Counselor, the leadership team developed and managed a well-recruited and trained staff to serve the needs of a unique and diverse student population. Roles and responsibilities were clearly delineated to support high quality school operations.

In order to allow the principal to focus mostly on internal communications and school operations, the Superintendent handled the majority of communications with external stakeholders, including Damar Services, Inc., the Board of Directors, Board Chair, Mayor's Office, and community partners. Additionally, the Superintendent has been very active in the broader charter school movement and has maintained communications with local policy advocates, other charter school leaders, and legislators. The Superintendent and Principal attended every board meeting and presented on the school's progress.



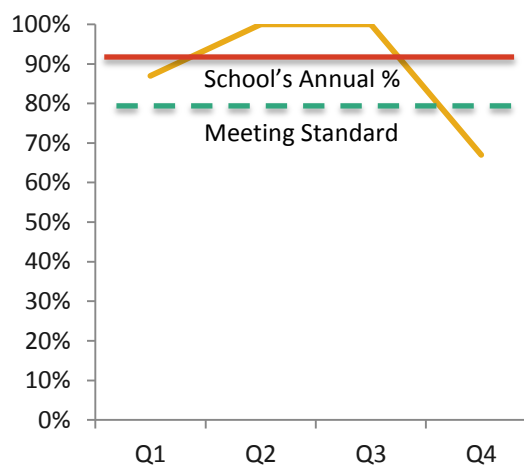
The Superintendent and Principal were able to accurately and transparently describe DCA's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, when the principal began mid-year, she immediately met with and observed all teachers to identify instructional strengths and areas for improvement to ensure student success. The school collected a variety of data on student performance and constantly worked to improve the DCA student experience.

Overall, the school leadership was consistently effective in its organizational and academic oversight and receives a rating of **Meets Standard** for this indicator.

3.2. Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard		The school presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Approaching standard		The school presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Meets standard		The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
	Exceeds standard		The school consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
3.2 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	MS	ES	MS	ES			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Submission of all required compliance documentation in a timely manner as set forth by the Mayor's Office, including but not limited to: meeting minutes and schedules, board member information, compliance reports and employee documentation						ES
	Compliance with the terms of its charter, including amendments, school policies and regulations, and applicable federal and state laws						MS
	Proactive and productive collaboration with its board and/or management organization (if applicable) in meeting governance obligations						ES
	Active participation in scheduled meetings with OEI, including the submission of required documentation by deadlines						MS

During the 2014-2015 school year, DCA submitted all compliance documentation to the Mayor's Office (OEI) and met its governance obligations. Although there were a few months throughout the year that documents were submitted after the deadline, the school actively engaged multiple personnel to ensure that all requirements were met and documents such as employee spreadsheets, board meeting minutes, and quarterly reports were submitted.

In addition to compliance documentation, DCA maintained compliance with all material sections of its charter and submitted amendments as necessary. The Superintendent and Principal were consistently and actively engaged in meetings with OEI and the Superintendent maintained frequent communication with OEI between scheduled meetings. For these reasons, DCA received a rating of **Exceeds Standard** for compliance obligations.

On-Time Compliance Reporting Percentage (3.2a)


3.3. Is the school's board active, knowledgeable, and does it abide by appropriate policies, systems, and processes in its oversight?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard			The school presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.			
	Approaching standard			The school presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.			
	Meets standard			The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.			
	Exceeds standard			The school consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.			
3.3 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	MS	MS	MS	MS			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Timely communication of organizational, leadership, academic, fiscal, or facility deficiencies to the Mayor's Office; or when the school's management company (if applicable) fails to meet its obligations as set forth in the charter						MS
	Clear understanding of the mission and vision of the school						ES
	Adherence to board policies and procedures, including those established in the by-laws, and revision of policies and procedures, as necessary						MS
	Recruitment and selection of members that are knowledgeable, represent diverse skill sets, and act in the best interest of the school and establishment of systems for member orientation and training						MS
	Effective and transparent management of conflicts of interest						MS
	Collaboration with school leadership that is fair, timely, consistent, and transparent in handling complaints or concerns						MS
	Adherence to its charter agreement as it pertains to governance structure						MS
	Holding of all meetings in accordance with Indiana Open Door Law						MS

The board of directors for Damar Charter School (DCS) is active, experienced, and provides competent oversight for the school. The board is comprised of individuals who have experience in business, finance, education, healthcare, and real estate. In an effort to ensure alignment and a transparent relationship, the current board chair is also an employee of Damar Services, Inc. The board did experience some turnover between the previous and current school years, but consistently worked to recruit new members and was successful in adding additional expertise to the board.

A review of meeting minutes and notes demonstrates the board's clear understanding of and commitment to the school's mission to provide individualized academic programming to students with developmental and related challenges. Given that Damar serves a unique population, the state's standard evaluation system did not provide a comprehensive assessment of the school's performance. However, the board, along with school leadership, worked to develop a new quarterly dashboard aligned to its new academic performance framework to ensure it was regularly discussing objective academic performance. Board members discussed the need to maintain high expectations for staff and students, but remained supportive and understanding of the unique school configuration and challenges. The board met every other month and regularly met quorum, with the majority of directors regularly in attendance. Directors received board packets in advance and received updates from the Superintendent and Principal. All board members were regularly engaged in school updates and progress and demonstrated their commitment to the school by offering their insights and experience on a regular basis.

Skill Sets Represented on Board

Education



Business



Finance



Healthcare



Real Estate



Parent



Board Overview

Damar Charter School, Inc. holds the charter for Damar Charter Academy.

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Members

majority

Required for Quorum

The DCA board meets bi-monthly.

DCA contracts with Damar Services, Inc. to provide financial, administrative, and operational support to the school. Additionally, Damar Services appoints four directors to the board, while five are elected independently.

The board and Superintendent maintained consistent communication with one another and the Mayor's Office. DCA raised two main concerns to the Mayor's office: the viability of the state accountability system and the status of its partnership with the Indiana Department of Child Services. In both cases, the Superintendent and Board Chair provided up to date and transparent information and noted any outstanding action items necessary to reach resolutions. Overall, both the board and the school were proactive in communicating updates and concerns with the Mayor's Office.

In governance operations, the board maintained compliance with its bylaws throughout the course of the year, with no formal review noted. Meetings were held as scheduled, the board met quorum, and it abided by Indiana Open Door Law. One potential conflict of interest is having a Board Chair who is also an employee of the school's management organization. Thus far, the board has properly managed this conflict by following legal protocol.

Due to the consistent leadership and stewardship of the board of directors, DCA received a rating of **Meets Standard** for board governance.

3.4. Does the school's board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard		The school presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Approaching standard		The school presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Meets standard		The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
	Exceeds standard		The school consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
3.4 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	n/a	n/a	AS	AS			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Regular communication with school leadership and/or its management company						MS
	Annual utilization of a performance based evaluation to assess its own performance, that of the school leader, and management organization (if applicable)						AS
	Collaboration with the school leader to establish clear objectives, priorities, and goals						AS
	Interaction with school leader that is conducive to the success of the school, including requesting and disseminating information in a timely manner, providing continuous and constructive feedback, and engaging the school leader in school improvement plans						MS

The DCA board held meetings every other month in which all stakeholders, including the Superintendent and Principal, provided reports on school updates. Between meetings, the Superintendent communicated with the Board Chair when necessary to provide leadership and support in school initiatives and events. As the Chief Financial Officer of Damar Services, Inc., the Board Chair also acted as an intermediary between the management organization and the school.

Annually, the Superintendent provides a thorough evaluation of the Principal, but the board has not yet implemented a formalized system and process for evaluating its own performance or that of the Superintendent. However, as mentioned above, the board did begin reviewing a quarterly dashboard showing academic data and progress towards framework indicators. Although the board reviewed the school's progress via the dashboard, it would benefit from establishing a much clearer set of goals and benchmarks for itself and the school.

In all observed meetings and interactions, the board and school leadership team appeared to have a positive and collaborative working relationship. Board members regularly asked questions, provided feedback, and engaged with school leaders in a way that demonstrated a consistent commitment to school improvement. However, due to the lack of formalized evaluation systems, DCA receives an **Approaching Standard** for school and board environment.

3.5. Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations, and provisions of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard		The school presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Approaching standard		The school presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Meets standard		The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
	Exceeds standard		The school consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
3.5 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	MS	MS	MS	MS			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Health and safety code requirements						MS
	Facility accessibility						MS
	Updated safety and emergency management plans						MS
	A facility that is well suited to meet the curricular and social needs of the students, faculty, and members of the community						ES

In 2014-15, DCA's facility met all health and safety code requirements and provided a safe environment conducive to learning. The facility's design, size, maintenance, security, equipment and furniture were all adequate to meet the school's needs. The school was accessible to all, including people with physical disabilities. The Mayor's Office monitoring of DCA's compliance with health and safety code requirements did not reveal any significant concerns related to these obligations. Accordingly, the school receives a Meets Standard for this indicator for 2014-15.

3.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific non-academic goals?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school does not meet standard on either school-specific non-academic goal.					
	Approaching standard	School is 1) approaching standard on one school-specific non-academic goal, while not meeting standard on the second goal, 2) approaching standard on both school-specific non-academic goals, OR 3) meeting standard on one school-specific non-academic goal, while approaching standard on the second goal.					
	Meets standard	School is 1) meeting standard on both school-specific non-academic goals, OR 2) meeting standard on one school-specific non-academic goal while exceeding standard on the second goal.					
	Exceeds standard	School is exceeding standard on both school-specific non-academic goals					
3.6 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	N/A	N/A	N/A	ES			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	DCA will retain between 70.0 and 79.9% of its teachers and support professionals annually.						ES
	DCA will meet enrollment projections at 100%.						ES

Each year, Mayor-sponsored charter schools set two non-academic goals that are aligned to or support the school's unique mission. All data for school-specific goals is self-reported by the individual school.

In the 2014-15 school year, DCA set its first non-academic goal around recruiting, training, and retaining special education teachers. The school reported that they retained 91% of their staff. Therefore, the school receives an **Exceeds Standard** on this goal.

DCA set its second goal around increasing community outreach and awareness to support DCA's enrollment. The school reported that they exceed their enrollment projection by 103%, and therefore receives an **Exceeds Standard** on this goal.

Overall, due to the ratings of the individual goals above, Damar Charter Academy receives an **Exceeds Standard** on this indicator for the 2014-15 school year.